



City Council

Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Mario Krstic, Chief of Police

THROUGH: John Jansons, City Manager *[Signature]*

DATE: July 11, 2016

SUBJECT: Council Request for Discussion of Animal Control

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is respectfully recommended that the City Council hear a presentation by Staff on Animal Control with possible direction to Staff.

BACKGROUND:

In response to concerns raised by Councilperson Benavides regarding his concern for public safety due to loose, vicious or nuisance dogs, and by Council consensus, staff was directed to an "Action Item" on the City Council Meeting Agenda related to Animal Control to discuss these concerns.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Farmersville has provided animal control services to the City of Farmersville for a number of years. Over this time the level of service has varied greatly. Currently the City of Farmersville staffs one Animal Control Officer that splits his time with Code Enforcement duties on a roughly 50/50 basis. The Animal Control officer is also "on-call" for after-hours emergencies that may arise. In addition, the City of Farmersville will assist the Cities of Exeter and Woodlake as needed in exchange for their assistance when the Farmersville Animal Control Officer is unavailable. This effectively provides the City of Farmersville 20 hours of Animal Control services in an average week.

In the six months since January of 2016 the Animal Control Officer has responded to over 260 calls for service and picked up and delivered over 230 animals to the Tulare Animal Control Facility where the City of Farmersville has contracted to handle kenneling. Considering that the part time status of the animal control officer's position this essentially equates to about 54 working days in the six-month period which then equates to an average of picking up 4.5 animals per working day. The average grows even greater when vacation, holiday, and training days are subtracted. The time associated with picking up an animal, completing paperwork, and delivering the animal to the Tulare Shelter is typically 1.5 hours at a minimum, the officer will also attempt to

maximize his time by waiting to see if other animals get picked up prior to making his run to Tulare. Due to the limited number of work hours and the time consuming nature of the work the Animal Control function is handled on a complaint driven basis. The officer will pick up obvious stray animals when he runs across them and will respond to reports of injured animals as well but all other calls are handled on a complaint basis. In addition, the officer takes care of the disposal of deceased animals located around town as well as the preparation for and the conducting of vicious animal hearings. He will also switch hats frequently between Animal Control and Code Enforcement throughout the day which further compromises the ability to focus time on any one function.

To say that this is an imperfect system and that the volume of work is such that not enough time is spent on either Code Enforcement or Animal Control would be accurate. To say that the Officer assigned to these two functions is not making full use of his time would be a gross misstatement. He does a tremendous amount of work with little support and even less recognition. There is often an assumption from individuals that staff is not working hard and nothing is being done because their specific problem may be slow to get addressed. What is most often the case is that things are being done to address the complaints, contacts are being made, follow-up is being done, yards and animals are being inspected, and in some cases traps are being put out to attempt to catch illusive animals. These actions are not always directly visible to those who have lodged complaints but they are in fact being done in most, if not all, cases.

The greatest single issue that faces the Animal Control function is essentially the same as discussed related to Code Enforcement several meetings ago, the work volume, at a minimum, would require a full time officer. However, the reality is that it is a costly service with little return on investment and the budget does not have the funds available to provide for a full time animal control officer. Regardless of the volume of animals picked up there is never a shortage of the number to be picked up from year to year.

COORDINATION & REVIEW:

The contents of this report has been coordinated with and reviewed by the City Manager.

ALTERNATIVES:

Staff is open to suggestions on how this function can be improved however based on funding availability and current staffing levels no alternatives are proposed at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

CONCLUSION:

It is staff's conclusion that based on available resources the animal control function is being handled as well as it can be. Improvements could be made if additional resources are made available however based on current staffing levels and current available funding it is necessary to continue to handle animal control on a complaint and emergency basis.

Respectfully Submitted:



Mario Krstic
Chief of Police

Approved By:



John Jansons
City Manager